THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI V. DHANANJAY KUMAR) : (a) and (b) No, Sir. "Foodgrade" is a commercial term used for "hydrocarbon free" jute bags developed specifically for packaging coffee, cocoa and shelled nuts to meet the specific requirements of these industries. Jute bags contain prescribed quantity of JBO and are internationally used and actively traded, Ministry of Environment and Forests has notified permitting use of 3% Non-halogenated hydrocarbons in manufacture of ECOMARK hessian and sackings. "Foodgrade" jute bags are only used for packing of coffee, cocoa and shelled nuts in selected international markets. Jute mills have, however, been instructed to restrict the use of JBO upto maximum of 3%.

Sickness in industrial units engaged in trade and making of ready made garments

†4092. SHRI RAM JETHMALANI : Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that there has been an increase in sickness in the industrial units engaged in the trade and making of ready-made garments under the Textile Industry over the last few years;

(b) if so, the percentage-wise increase in sickness estimated in the year 1998-99, 1999-2000 and 2000-2001; and

(c) the number of units which were closed down in the first three months of the year 2001-2002 ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI V. DHANANJAY KUMAR) : (a) to (c) As per latest information available from Reserve Bank of India, the numbers of sick SSI units in the textile industry including garment units at the end of March, 1998, 1999 and 2000 were 11065, 24306 and 25764 respectively. There are no reports from the industry or trade regarding increased closure of garment units.

Export Promotion Councils

4093. SHRI M. RAJASEKARA MURTHY : Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state :

(a) the role of Export Promotion Councils in export promotion efforts of India;

(b) the list of the Export Promotion Councils under administrative control of the Ministry of Textiles;

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) the recommendations of the Committee set up by the Ministry under the Chairmanship of the Textile Commissioner;

(d) the names of the EPCs who have adopted the recommendations of this Committee relevant to EPCs; and

(e) the names of other EPCs who have not adopted the recommendations and the action Government propose to take in this regard ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI V. DHANANJAY KUMAR) : (a) As per Chapter 13 of Exim Policy, the main role of the EPCs is to project India's image abroad as a reliable supplier of high quality goods and services. In particular, the EPCs shall encourage and monitor the observance of international standards and specifications by exporters. Some of the major functions of the EPCs are :

To provide commercially useful information and assistance to their members in developing and increasing their exports.

To organize visits of delegations of its members abroad to explore overseas market opportunities.

To organize participation in the trade fairs, exhibitions and buyer-seller meets in India and abroad.

To promote interaction between the exporting community and the Government both at the Central and State levels.

To build a statistical base and provide data on the exports and imports of the country, exports and imports of their members, as well as other relevant international trade data.

Undertaking market studies in individual foreign countries regularly as well as on *ad-hoc* basis.

Recommending export targets to the Government and monitoring performance against the target fixed by the Government.

In-depth analysis of the export performance and suggest remedial measures.

To recommend policy initiatives to the Government for promotion of exports and to represent to the Government on difficulties experienced by exporters in availing the export benefits under various export promotion schemes of the Government.

(b) The Export Promotion Councils (EPCs) under the administrative control of the Ministry of Textiles are as under :—

Apparel Export Promotion Council, New Delhi.

The Synthetic & Rayon Textiles Export Promotion Council, Mumbai.

Carpet Export Promotion Council, New Delhi.

Indian Silk Export Promotion Council, Mumbai.

Handloom Export Promotion Council, Chennai.

The Cotton Textiles Export Promotion Council, Mumbai.

Powerloom Development & Export Promotion Council, Mumbai.

Wool & Woollen Export Promotion Council, New Delhi.

Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts, New Delhi.

(c) An Expert Group under the Textile Commissioner alongwith 13 other members, comprising of the Executive Heads of all EPCs; the representatives of Ministry of Textiles; Company Law Board; and Addl. Textile Commissioner, was constituted to study the functioning of EPCs and to make recommendation to improve the same. The Expert Group in its report has recommended parameters for membership and election of the Council/Chairman, cap on overall tenure of Executive Committee members; delegation of financial powers; staff control and supervision, etc. The Department of Commerce had also set up a separate Committee under the Chairmanship of Additional Secretary which formulated Model Articles of Association to be adopted by various EPCs to make them more democratic and transparent. The report of the Expert Group submitted by Textile Commissioner and the model Articles of Association framed by Department of Commerce were sent to textile EPCs to incorporate and adopt the suggested changes.

(d) and (e) Synthetic & Rayon Textiles Export Promotion Council (SRTEPC), Cotton Textiles Export Promotion Council (TEXPROCIL), Handloom Export Promotion Council (HEPC) and Indian Silk Export Promotion Council (ISEPC) have since amended their Articles of Association. Other EPCs are at various stages of amending the same.